



SCOUTS BSA TROOP 5
Wilmette, Illinois

TO: Eagle Scout Candidates

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RE: The Journey to Eagle: 8–The Eagle Home Stretch

After you, a Life Scout and Eagle candidate, have completed your Eagle Scout Service Project, you may be tempted to think, “I’m nearly ‘all the way home’ in my journey to Eagle; there are just one or two little things remaining to be done until I can have my Eagle Court of Honor.”

While you have come a long way, you still have a number of things to do. The point of this memo is to describe this process, which we refer to as the “**Eagle Home Stretch.**”

Remember: **time is of the essence.** You must have your Eagle Scoutmaster Conference before you turn 18,¹ and you should have an Eagle Board of Review (“**EBOR**”) no later than three months after your 18th birthday.²

¹ For Eagle candidates who joined Scouts BSA in 2019 and who were 16 or older at February 1, 2019, there is an exception to this 18th birthday requirement that extends the deadline until 24 months after the Eagle candidate’s 18th birthday. This memo will not go into all the details, because Troop 5 has already obtained extensions for all Scouts affected by this exception. Where this memo refers to an Eagle candidate’s 18th birthday, it should be understood by those Scouts to refer to the last day of the applicable extension period.

² There are limited circumstances under which the EBOR may be held more than three months (but, in any event, not more than six months) after the candidate’s 18th birthday. In order to do this, the Northeast Illinois Council must preapprove the EBOR. The official advancement guidelines specify as follows: “To initiate approval, the candidate, the candidate’s parent or guardian, the unit leader, or a unit committee member attaches to the application a statement explaining the delay.”

It will usually take at least six weeks after you have finished your Project workdays to complete the steps necessary to hold a Scoutmaster Conference, and then another four to six weeks to have an EBOR. So do not delay!

Important Note: This memo assumes that you have completed all of your merit badges and have sufficient Position of Responsibility credit. If there is any doubt about that, contact your Scoutmaster or the Life to Eagle Advisor immediately.

Identity of Life to Eagle Advisor. Each of us is a Life to Eagle Advisor (“**LTE Advisor**”) for Troop 5. Before you get to the Eagle Home Stretch, you will have worked with one of us to get LTE Advisor sign-off on your Project Proposal. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, you will work with the same LTE Advisor on your Eagle Home Stretch documents. We use the term “**your LTE Advisor**” in this memo to refer to that person.

In addition, you may also consult on Eagle Home Stretch matters with the adult leader who acted as your Project Coach.

Eagle Contact List. There are a lot of different people that you will need to contact in the course of your Eagle Home Stretch. We have listed the names and contacts for each of those people on an “**Eagle Contact List,**” which we will furnish to you when you begin working on your Eagle Project Proposal. This memo uses the “titles” that are indicated on that Eagle Contact List for each applicable person.

There are two main parts to this memo. The first part contains some tips on the documents that you must prepare, and the second part details all of the steps to be taken.

PART I: PREPARING YOUR EAGLE HOME STRETCH DOCUMENTS

There are four key documents you need to prepare following completion of your Eagle Project:

- Project Report
- Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose
- Eagle Scout Rank Application
- List of Leadership Positions, Honors and Awards

Send each of these documents to your LTE Advisor, who will review and comment on each one. It is almost always the case that an Eagle candidate prepares two or three drafts before these are finalized. The better each first draft is, the faster this process will go.

Each of these documents should be prepared with care. Your LTE Advisor will be a stickler for grammar, so please write thoughtfully and carefully. Remember the comments on style, grammar and spelling that you received on your Eagle Project Proposal, and apply those principles here.

The audience for whom you are writing these materials is, ultimately, the members of the EBOR. They are adult leaders from other Troops; they will not have participated in your project, nor in all likelihood will they know you. Your task is to help them get to know you through this

paperwork. You should want to give them your finest work product: *They are the ones who decide whether you will become an Eagle Scout.*

A. Project Report

Project Report Template. The Project Report template has been specified by the Scouts BSA; it is part of the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook. For your convenience, Troop 5 has prepared a Word template of the Project Report, **9a–Eagle Scout Service Project Report**. You can find it through [this link to the Eagle Scout Resources page](#) on the Troop 5 website (www.troop5.com). (All of the numbered documents identified in red ink in this memo can be found on the Eagle Resources Page.) Use that Word template to prepare your Project Report. The Word version is much easier to work with than the pages in the fillable PDF workbook.

Guidance in Annotated Project Report. In addition, Troop 5 has created an annotation of the Project Report, which contains helpful and important guidance on how to prepare the Project Report. That annotated document, **9b-Eagle Scout Service Project Report Annotated**, is also available to be downloaded from the [Eagle Scout Resources page](#). You should review that annotated report prior to, and while you are preparing, your Project Report.

B. Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose

The Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose is an essay that tells the EBOR the most about who you are as an Eagle candidate. You should treat writing this Statement as an opportunity to think deeply about what Scouting has meant to you. Think of it as an essay about yourself; do not take it as a series of discrete answers to specific questions. Be introspective. Put meaning into your Statement.

Your Statement should be at least three pages long, double-spaced. Many have been much longer, sometimes up to ten pages.

This essay **does not** need to be devoted exclusively to Scouting; many excellent Statements of Ambition and Life Purpose have delved deeply into other aspects of the writer's life. As an added benefit, a Statement that has addressed other aspects of your life may provide you with inspiration for essays that are needed for college applications.

Mandatory Topics. There are a few topics that **must** be covered in your Statement:

- What influence has Scouting had on your personal and professional goals?
- How has Scouting influenced your personal and spiritual growth?
- How do you plan, during the rest of your Scouting career as a youth, and then as an adult, to be involved in Scouting?
- What are your current plans or expectations for what you will do when you graduate from high school?

- Make sure your essay includes the full title for this document, along with a header that lists your name, troop number, town and state.

Optional Topics. There are a great many other topics that Eagle candidates have explored in their Statements. Among them are the following:

- Significant activities in my life beyond Scouting: school, sports, music or theater, volunteer work, other youth organizations
- Influences on my character development other than Scouting, such as faith, family, friends, or other significant activities
- What I think I want to study in college, and what I hope to do when I finish college
- How my attitude toward Scouting changed over the years
- When I decided I wanted to be an Eagle Scout, or why I waited so long to finish my Eagle requirements
- What I enjoyed most (or least) about Scouting
- What the Scout Oath and Scout Law mean to me
- Things I now realize about Scouting that I didn't understand until recently
- The hardest thing I did in Scouting, or lessons I have learned from Scouting

The key to the Statement is to make it *personal*. This is your chance to talk about yourself. There is no formula for this document, nor is there a template. Tell the members of the Eagle Board about you.

C. **Eagle Scout Rank Application**

1. Gather Necessary Information. In order to prepare the Eagle Application, you will need information from several different sources.

a. Obtain your NEIC Person Profile. Contact the the Northeast Illinois Council (the “NEIC”) to request an electronic copy of your “Person Profile.” This is a report that shows your status on the NEIC’s records, including advancement data.

The person to call is the NEIC Profile Contact shown on the Eagle Contact List. When you receive your Person Profile, check to make sure it lists all of your merit badges; missing badges are the most common problem with these reports.

b. Get your Troop 5 Advancement Report. Troop 5 maintains an unofficial database (currently on the TroopMaster platform, but we may be switching to the Scoutbook platform) that has records on your advancement. Ask the Troop 5 Registrar shown on the Eagle Contact List for a copy of your advancement report from the platform we are then using (the “Troop 5 Advancement Report”). If there are discrepancies between the Troop 5 Advancement

Report and the NEIC Advancement Report, be sure to tell the Troop 5 Registrar, so that the two of you can work together to figure out how to fix those discrepancies. In the end, the two reports must match.

c. Locate your Personal Records. You should also locate your personal advancement records, including the portion of the signed blue card you received for each merit badge you earned (other than summer camp merit badges, as blue cards are not used there).

2. Prepare a draft of the Eagle Application. After you have gathered the information identified above, you can prepare the Eagle application.

a. Download the Application. The official rank application, **10–Eagle Scout Rank Application**, can also be found on the [Eagle Scout Resources page](#). It is a “fillable pdf” document. (Note that this document can be very hard to fill out on an Apple device, such as an iPad or a Mac; use a PC or Windows device, if at all possible.) Download the fillable pdf to your computer and fill it out. You should use your personal records, the Troop 5 Advancement Report and the NEIC Person Profile to prepare a working draft, to see if you note any discrepancies.

b. Tips on the Application. Here are a few tips on specific aspects of the Eagle Application:

- *Had you completed fifth grade upon joining?* This is sort of a trick question. Most Scouts join in March of their fifth grade year; if that is you, then the answer is “No.”
- *References.* You need to fill in this information, and send your recommendation requests to at least four of these references (not counting your parents). Here are some tips:
 - *Religious.* This person does not need to be a minister, priest, rabbi, imam or other cleric. It does need to be a person who will testify, if asked, to your belief in a supreme being (though we are not aware of a case in the NEIC where that question has been asked).
 - *Employer.* Only fill in if you have an employer.
 - *Two other references.* These two other references should not be your Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster with Troop 5. Otherwise, it can be anyone.
- *List of merit badges.* There are a few tricky parts here:
 - Use the dates from the NEIC Person Profile, in the case of a discrepancy with the Troop 5 Advancement Report.
 - Note that there are three places where you need to cross out one or two Eagle-required badges (for example, if you earned Lifesaving but not Emergency Prep, cross out Emergency Prep). If you earned both badges, count one as the Eagle-required badge and cross out the other one (but, if you wish, you can list the crossed-out badge as an optional badge).

- Note that you only list 21 badges. If you earned more than that, make sure the ones you choose to include show that you had four Eagle-required badges, and seven total badges, by the time of your Star board of review and seven Eagle-required badges, and 11 total badges, by the time of your Life board of review.
- *Requirement 4 - POR credit.* You should always talk with your Scoutmaster or your LTE Advisor about the appropriate dates (and, perhaps, PORs) to fill into these blanks. The application only allows two lines for POR credit, and it's entirely possible that you might have held more than two PORs while a Life Scout, or had PORs that covered "split" time periods. In such cases, some judicious determinations will need to be made.

c. LTE Advisor Review. Once you have completed a working draft, send it, along with your NEIC Person Profile and Troop 5 Advancement Report, to your LTE Advisor to check it over.

D. List of Leadership Positions, Honors and Awards

The requirement for this list is referenced in the Eagle Application. But there is no precise template to use; you should create your own document.

One section of this list should delineate the various Positions of Responsibility ("PORs") you have held in Troop 5 and Crew 5. Do not rely just on the Troop 5 Advancement Report for your PORs, as that report typically does not contain a comprehensive record. Look back at the Record-Keeping Worksheets that you have maintained over your time in Troop 5, which should include a listing of your PORs.

This document should also include the honors and awards that you have received in Scouting (outside of merit badges and rank advancements), such as:

- Crew awards (Discovery, Ranger, Summit, etc.)
- Order of the Arrow
- Religious awards
- Camping and service awards

Finally, please note that this document is not just a list of PORs and Scouting awards and honors. In addition to those items, it should be a list of positions, along with honors and awards, from all the other organizations and programs in which you have participated: place of worship, school, extra-curricular activities, volunteer organizations, and so on.

PART II: COMPLETING THE EAGLE HOME STRETCH

A. Becoming an Eagle Scout

To complete your journey to Eagle Scout after you have prepared the four documents discussed above, take the following steps:

1. Obtain your LTE Advisor's Sign-off; Schedule your Eagle Scoutmaster Conference. When your LTE Advisor is satisfied with the contents of the four Eagle Home

Stretch documents listed in Part I of this memo, your LTE Advisor will send you an email notification indicating sign-off, and will copy your Scoutmaster on that message. You can then contact your Scoutmaster to schedule your Eagle Scoutmaster Conference.

2. Make sure all recommendation letters are sent out. When your Eagle Project Proposal was approved by the Potawatomi District Eagle Project Review Representative shown on the Eagle Contact List (or by someone else designated by that representative), you should have received four forms to request other people to write recommendation letters for you.

3. Prepare your Eagle Binder. You will need to assemble a binder of all significant Eagle documents to show your Scoutmaster at your Scoutmaster Conference.

The binder is a three ring binder, usually white, of the type into which an outside cover page can be slipped. The contents of the binder are:

- a cover page that has your name, Troop, some reference to Eagle, and maybe a picture or computer graphic of your choosing
- numbered, lettered or titled tabs or dividers between the sections
- the following seven sections:
 - Table of Contents
 - Eagle Application
 - Eagle Project Proposal
 - Eagle Project Plan
(If, as is the case for most Troop 5 Scouts, your Project Proposal was so complete that you did not need to prepare a Project Plan, we recommend that you include this tab, but then insert a page in the tab that says something like, "My Project Report was sufficiently detailed that a Project Plan was not required.")
 - Eagle Project Report, including pictures and appendices
 - Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose
 - Listing of Leadership Positions, Honors and Awards

4. Have your Eagle Scoutmaster Conference. When you have completed steps 1 through 3, you may meet with your Scoutmaster to have your conference. You should be in full uniform for the conference and should bring the Eagle binder with the original Eagle Application and other contents. You should also bring your Scout Handbook. Your Scoutmaster should sign your Eagle Application, Eagle Project Report and Scout Handbook at the conclusion of the conference.

Your Scoutmaster Conference must be completed before your 18th birthday.

5. Get signatures on the final copy of the Eagle Application. You also need to get the signature of the Troop 5 Parent Committee Chair shown on the Eagle Contact List on the final copy of the Eagle Application.

6. Take (or mail) the completed Eagle Application to the NEIC for further processing. Make a copy to put into your Eagle binder, and take or mail the original Eagle Application to the NEIC. You should give or send it to the NEIC Eagle Application Contact shown on the Eagle Contact List, who should be at the front desk at the NEIC headquarters. If you are taking it there, call this person ahead of time to confirm he or she will be there when you arrive. He or she will keep that original until it has been processed, and will then deliver it to the Potawatomi District Advancement Chair ahead of your EBOR.

7. Deliver three copies of your Eagle binder to the Potawatomi District Advancement Chair. This person is listed on the Eagle Contact List. He will review certain aspects of the Eagle binder. If he believes changes are in order, he will contact you.

The Potawatomi District Advancement Chair has a box outside of his front door to which you should deliver your Eagle binders.

8. Satisfying Conditions for Eagle Board of Review. The Potawatomi District Advancement Chair will be ready to schedule an EBOR when:

(a) he is satisfied with the Eagle binder, and

(b) The NEIC tells him that it has received enough recommendation letters (or that the references have been determined to be unresponsive)³ and that the Eagle Application has been processed.

It usually takes at least 4 weeks for these things to occur.

9. Scheduling of Eagle Board of Review. Once the conditions in Step 8 are satisfied, the Potawatomi District Advancement Chair will schedule your EBOR. That will usually take another two weeks, and possibly four weeks, depending on how many other Eagle candidates are awaiting their EBORs.

Once your EBOR is scheduled, you will need to invite your Scoutmaster (or, if your Scoutmaster is unavailable, an Assistant Scoutmaster) to introduce you at your EBOR.

The Potawatomi District Advancement Chair will tell you where the EBOR will be held and its starting time.

10. The Eagle Board of Review. On the night of your EBOR, arrive at least ten minutes in advance of the starting time. Wear your full uniform (with your Life patch); this can be either your Scouts BSA uniform or your Crew uniform. If you are wearing your Scouts BSA uniform, you should also wear your merit badge sash. Do not wear an OA sash, as this is not an OA event. Bring your Scout Handbook.

³ The BSA's advancement guidelines specify that an EBOR must not be denied or postponed due to unresponsive references, and that the Eagle candidate's sole responsibility is to send out the requests for recommendations.

The members of the EBOR will be Scoutmasters and other Scouters from troops and crews other than Troop 5 and Crew 5.

If you have done all of the foregoing, we are sure your EBOR will bestow the rank of Eagle Scout upon you. Congratulations!

The date of your EBOR is the date that you earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

11. Application is sent in to BSA National. After the EBOR, the NEIC sends the application to BSA National headquarters in Texas. It usually takes BSA National about a month to approve it. An Eagle Scout may opt for expedited shipping and processing, which takes 2 – 5 business days, for an additional \$65 fee. If you wish to use this option, your parent or guardian should call the NEIC Eagle Application Contact shown on the Eagle Contact List to obtain expediting instructions and to make payment.

12. NEIC Postcard. Once BSA National approves it, the NEIC sends a postcard to Troop 5 saying that the Eagle "hardware" (Eagle medal, cloth patch, mom and dad pins, mentor pin and Eagle certificate) can be picked up. The Troop 5 Advancement Chair shown on the Eagle Contact List will pick that up and hold it until your Eagle Court of Honor.

B. Celebrate your Achievement!

1. Hold an Eagle Court of Honor. We hope you will want to have an Eagle Court of Honor (“**ECO**H”), as earning the rank of Eagle Scout is an achievement worthy of a celebration. It is not necessary to have an ECOH, but we think you will enjoy it.

You may want to hold your ECOH together with one or more other Eagle Scouts, whether from Troop 5 or another troop. Doing so makes for a larger celebration, and it also relieves some of the time commitment for your Scoutmaster and other adult leaders who are invited to participate in a number of ECOHs each year.

2. Picking the ECOH Date and Venue. Consult with your Scoutmaster and the Troop 5 Parent Committee Chair to schedule this event. As you know, Troop 5 and Crew 5 have busy calendars, and it is preferable to select a date on which competing events are not scheduled.

You will also need to select a venue. ECOHs are often held at the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmette, but there are many other venues available.

3. Planning and Carrying Out the ECOH. The responsibility for effecting an ECOH falls on the Eagle Scouts and their families. There are many considerations for this event; your Scoutmaster or your LTE Advisor, among others, can point you toward resources to use in developing your Eagle Court of Honor, such as a sample script and sample bulletin.

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This memo may seem daunting, but we can assure you that this process is manageable. Earning the rank of Eagle Scout is challenging, but achievable. As Life to Eagle Advisors, our

role is to guide you along the path to Eagle, and our goal is to make the journey one that you will remember with great satisfaction as a time of personal growth.

We look forward to celebrating your achievement!